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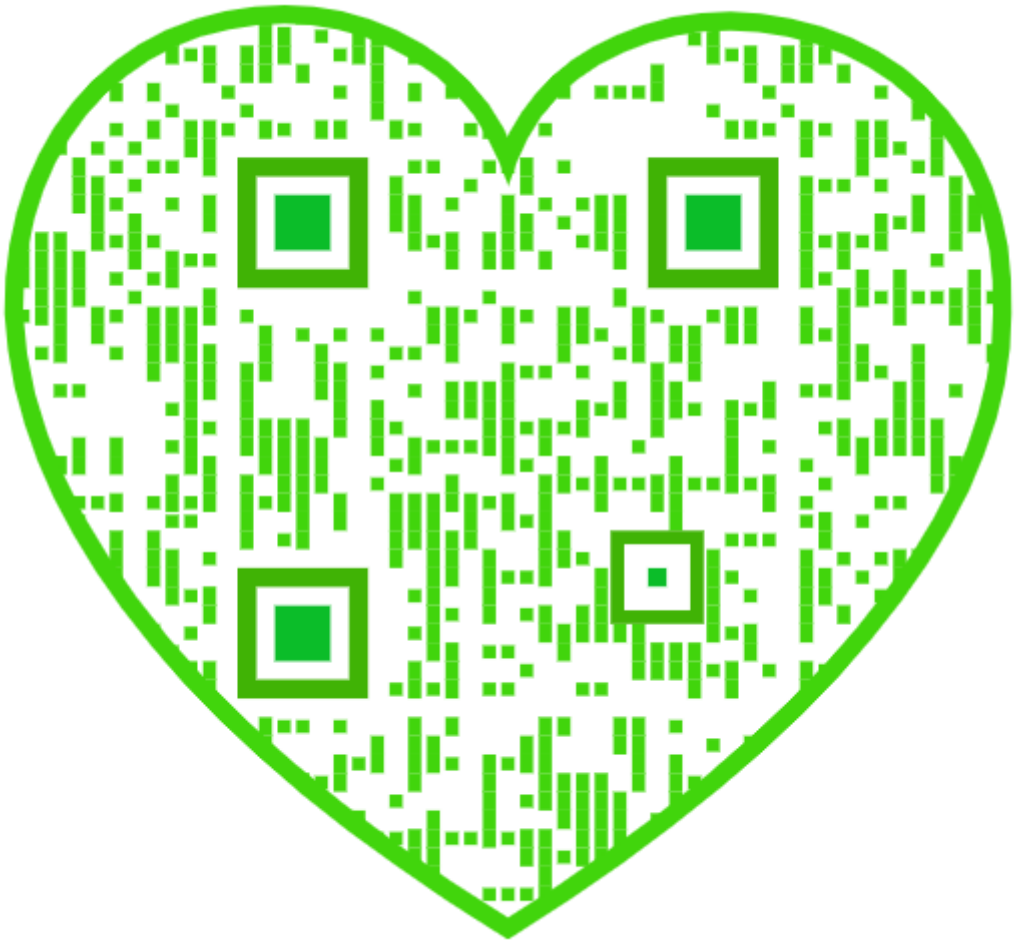
SUGGESTIONS FOR LAUNDRY WORK

BY

MRS. MARY JOHNSON



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Suggestions for Laundry Work.

BY MRS. MARY JOHNSON.

INTRODUCTION.

I have been engaged in laundry work for fifteen (15) years, and during the past six (6) years I have been employed in the laundry departments of large dry goods houses. During this time I have had the opportunity to study and apply different methods of cleaning to all kinds of materials, and I have been asked frequently to give my receipts and to explain my methods by numerous patrons of the store and by friends. In order to explain more satisfactorily my methods, and to give the results of my own practical experience both to those beginning such work and also to the large number of women of moderate means who are obliged, in their own homes, to do part, at least, of their own work, I am publishing these hints and suggestions.

TABLE LINEN.

Each piece of linen, table-cloth, napkin, doily, must be inspected carefully for oily stains, each one of which, if present, must be rubbed out with soft soap and cold

water. If hot water is used the stains become fixed. After such stains are removed the pieces should be soaked in hot water and soft soap and boiled. If your table linen needs whitening, boil for twenty (20) minutes with a tablespoonful of "bleach" added to boiler of cloth. In rinsing your cloths, get all the soap well off. To make the table linen look like new, add a teaspoonful of Sugar of Lead to the rinsing water. If there are colored napkins among your linen, these must be washed quickly and separately as they are liable to fade and spoil your white linen if washed together. Never boil colored goods as boiling will fade or lighten the color. Do not blue colored articles. All white clothes are to be blued, all colored clothes rinsed in clear water.

TO SHRINK NEW LINEN.

Dip in hot water, into which a piece of alum the size of a walnut has been dissolved in.

SHIRTS: WHITE AND COLORED.

New white shirts should be soaked in cold water and borax, to remove any oil stains; then washed in a hot suds like any ordinary white goods. First rub the wrist bands well, then the neck band. The arm holes of the shirt are usually discolored from coat dye, and it may be necessary to use a little "bleach" to bring them back

to color. If so soak that part of the shirt in boiling hot bleach. You may use a tablespoonful in the boiler for the other part of the shirt to keep it white. "Bleach" will never injure your clothes if used in way directed.

UNDERWEAR.

Fine underwear should be handled with care. Never rub it hard. Soak it in good soap suds and rub it gently. Look over the garment and find the soiled spots. Rub these between your hands. If there are stains, first soak the garment in *cold* water and then put it into hot suds, adding a little soda. If you use my " bleach " rinse thoroughly before bluing. All ribbons should be removed from the underwear before washing and washed separately. If muslins and lawns are washed in water strained from wheat or bran they need no soap nor starch. This water cleanses and stiffens the article washed in it. After washing rinse out in clear water, and use bluing water to suit. To make this water take one quart of bran to three quarts of water. Strain the water and let it stand for a time.

HANDKERCHIEFS.

Handkerchiefs that have been used for colds and contain phlegm should be soaked in water containing about one tablespoonful of borax. This will remove all traces of the phlegm in a short time.

BLANKETS.

Blankets should be washed in a soft soap. Use one tablespoonful of borax to every pint of soap. Put the blankets into a tub of lukewarm water to soak, and if there are any soiled spots, rub them clean before the rest of the blanket is washed. When washed clean rinse them in a nice soft soap suds, not too hot nor too cold as either would cause shrinking, and then wring them out as dry as possible. They must be dryed quickly in the sun or heat. The time to wash blankets is in July or September.

FLANNELS.

To wash flannels so that they will be soft and nice instead of hard, skill is required on the part of the washer. All the oil of perspiration should be removed before any soap is applied to an article. To remove this oil, before using any soap, soak in water containing a little washing soda. Don't have the soda very strong. Wash in a lukewarm suds of soft soap. When washed, rinse out and dry quickly. Be sure that the flannels are perfectly dry before putting them away, as the dampness shrinks them. Never wash flannels in water used for other washing, as the white flint of the cotton gets mixed with the flannel and spoils its appearance.

BATHROBES.

Bathrobes are washed in a warm suds and rinsed in a

soapy water the same as flannels. Wring out well and dry quickly.

COLORED CLOTHES.

Colored clothes must be washed with care, particularly stockings. Stockings that are troublesome to clean may be washed by being stretched on a board and scrubbed with a hand brush. If the colors are not fast, rinse quickly and open by pulling them up on the hands until the toe is reached. Then pin them by the toe and side on the line. Woolen stockings should be dried on a wooden shape of the right size. This is made easily of old boards.

Many bright flannels owe their brilliant colors to an acid compound of coal tar; washed in soap or ammonia the alkali neutralizes the acids and the colors fade. Acetic acid used in the rinsing will restore the colors.

CHINTZ.

How to wash it so that no dampness will affect it. It will wear nice and stiff for any length of time.

Take two pounds of rice and boil, strain, and add about two gallons of lukewarm water; pour the whole into a tub and wash your chintz in it. Rinse in a little of the rice water. The rice water will answer for both starch and soap and is much better, as there is nothing in the pure rice to spoil anything in the material.

To set colors in any colored goods put a teaspoonful

of acetic acid in rinsing water and rinse the materials well. Vinegar can be used also, but it contains coloring material.

Laces must be washed with care; white lace can be washed in borax or ammonia water. Use but a little of either in a soft soap water and let the lace soak for about an hour. Do not rub. If there are any spots very much soiled, you may rub them through the hand. Do not wring; squeeze out in your hands and let the water run through your fingers. A little blue may be used in washing white lace. Cream lace must be dipped in coffee or tea water as deep as desired. White lace may be made yellow by using coffee or tea or saffron. To make yellow lace white use some bleach boiled; soak lace in bleach water for about five minutes and rinse quickly in fresh water. Wash out thoroughly all trace of the bleach.

To remove rust spots from lace or any other white articles, the following is perfectly harmless and will remove such spots quickly: Dissolve a pinch of oxalic acid in two tablespoonfuls of boiling water, and soak the article for about three minutes or until the rust disappears. Rinse well in cold water. It will also whiten the goods, but to be effective all traces of the acid must be rinsed out thoroughly.

In washing lace be sure to open all scallops. You may pin them down on a sheet to dry and all the edges must be straight. If you want fine lace stiff use a little gum arabic in your rinsing water. It also makes the lace look like new. Use about two ounces of the gum

arabic powder to a pint of boiling water; cover it and let it stand till the next day, drain and have it free from dregs. Put in a bottle and cork until there is need to use it again.

Never make lace very stiff. To look nice it must have a soft finish. Very little water starch will make lace very stiff.

A teaspoonful of gum arabic added to any starch will improve clothes wonderfully, either white or colored.

In case an iron is not handy fill a bottle full of hot water and cork tightly; roll the lace around it and when dry you will find the lace to be ironed perfectly. This can be done only with very narrow lace; or it depends upon the size of the bottle.

Housekeepers should always have three kinds of acids in the laundry. One for removing stains, another for setting colors and the third for brightening colors. Oxalic acid is for removing stains. Sugar of lead is for setting the colors. Acetic may be used also for setting and brightening colors. It will be found wise to test a small piece first before washing a whole garment. All blues are not made from the same kind of acids. Tartar acid will brighten colors; vinegar sometimes may take its place, but not always to the best advantage as it contains color matter.

Lace curtains, etc., can be mended by taking a piece of an old curtain and dipping it in a little raw starch. Lay the piece on the place where you need the patch and put a hot iron over it. It will remain there until it gets wet or washed.

Chamois gloves are washed in soap suds on the hands, just the same as kid gloves are cleaned. When washed rinse in clear tepid water. If ironed out damp it makes them nice and soft and gives them that new look. If they have black stripes on the back set the black with a little ox-gall before washing. Put your ox-gall in water and dip a piece of cloth or sponge in the water and wash off your stripes. After the color is set they will not run when washed again.

FEATHERS.

White feathers and how they are washed: White feathers should be washed in a suds made from soft soap, with a little pearl ash or bicarbonate of potash added to the water. Put the feathers into this suds and draw them through your fingers until the dirt comes out. When clean rinse them in a second water with a little bluing. Then draw them through the hands and shake them well. When the water is all out rub them through corn starch until dry. Shake them well and put them in the sun or some place where there is heat. Black feathers are cleaned in the same way, only add a little ox-gall to the water to set the color. Do not use bluing or bleach on black feathers. To curl draw them through the thumbs with a knife.

FURS.

White fur neck pieces or muffs: To clean white furs

first you must beat them with a stick and get all the loose hairs out; then shake well. Put some corn starch on a large paper or cloth and roll the furs in it. When the starch becomes dirty change it for some clean starch. Keep changing the starch until the furs are clean. Always shake the dirty starch out before using clean starch. You will find that this will leave them perfectly white and just like new. Keep them away from the heat as heat is not good for them.

WHITE KID SHOES.

If you have shoe trees put them in your shoes; if not put something in them to keep them in shape. Make a soap suds of lukewarm water and wash with a cloth until all the dirt disappears, then rub off with clear soft water. Dry them by rubbing them with a clean soft cloth. If they are not white enough rub them over with a piece of chalk or magnesia.

WHITE SPORT COATS.

Sport coats should be washed in a soft soap suds. Look over the coat for soiled spots. Rub these spots through your hands until clean and rinse in a little soap suds. Wring out thoroughly, shake well and hang out to dry.

Fluids of all kinds shorten labor and may be used without any danger if the laundress knows how to use them properly. Bleach can be used on white goods of

all kinds. Use a half cupful to a boiler of clothes. This bleach must be rinsed out thoroughly. Bleach is expensive if you want to buy it already made, but any housekeeper can make it herself for about twenty-five cents. It is used also for scrubbing tables, floors or as a disinfectant. Do not use where there is any paint, only use on white boards. To make bleach use two pounds of washing soda to one box of chloride of lime. Boil in a pail for twenty minutes, then let it stand and drain off the water. The thick lime that is left can be used for a disinfectant. This fluid made hot will remove mildew or any stains, and it will also whiten materials, but all traces of it must be rinsed out afterwards. Ink stains can be soaked first in hot bleach, which turns the ink to rust; then put a pinch of oxalic acid on the rust stains and soak in boiling hot water until they disappear, and rinse well in two or three waters. Leave no trace of the acid in the goods. To remove ink stains from colored goods melt hot tallow and soak the goods in it, and when the tallow is washed the ink will disappear. Old tallow candles are good for this purpose, and if you can pour the hot tallow through the ink spot the spots will disappear.

KID GLOVES.

Pour a cupful of benzine into a pan. No lights of any kind must be around, as benzine is explosive. Put the gloves on your hands and rub them one over the other in the same manner as when washing the hands.

Do this until the dirt disappears, and then rinse the gloves in some clean benzine and keep them on the hands until they become partly dry. When partly dry rub them with a clean cloth and hang in the open to dry thoroughly.

BROADCLOTH.

To remove stains from broadcloth take one-half (½) ounce of good pipe clay and mix with six drops of alcohol. Make a paste of this and add six drops of spirits of turpentine. Mix these all together and lay on the soiled parts until dry and the stain will rub off. For sponging or cleaning black woolen cloth or cashmere a very good mixture is this: Mix one ounce of borax and one ounce of camphor with boiling water. When cool, add one quart of alcohol. Bottle and cork tightly. Shake well before sponging the garment with it.

IRONING.

When sprinkling clothes, separate the white from the colored. If you have white stiff shirts ring out the tails in a pail of water and turn the dampened tails up over the stiffened bosoms of the shirt. Place the cuffs in the centre of the dampened shirt and have them opened straight out and roll tightly in the shirt.

To sprinkle plain clothes use a small whisk broom which dip in water and sprinkle over the clothes.

To dampen stiff collars, ring out a large piece of

white cloth in cold water and lay the collar straight on this cloth. They lay another damp cloth on top of the collar and roll up tightly.

Roll the shirts and collars together in a clean sheet. Place them in a box and put something heavy upon them to send the moisture all the way through them. Let them lay dampened over night and they will iron better the next day.

SILKS.

All silks must be iron damp, and all pongees must be perfectly dry before ironing. If pongee is ironed wet it will leave white spots on the goods. Never iron colored goods wet as the colors are apt to run.

ACIDS.

For different colors you must use different acids. For black use ox-gall, one tablespoonful to a pail of water; for blue use acetic acid, one tablespoonful to a pail of water; for pink or green tartar, one tablespoonful to a pail of water. A teaspoonful of sugar of lead will also set blue colors. All these acids must be used in your rinsing water. All traces of these acids must be washed out in cold water afterwards. You can use also a teaspoonful of ammonia in this water.

After the washing is finished look all over it. See

if there are any buttons to be put on or fastened or any pieces to be mended. These should be laid aside and mended before putting them away if you want to abide by the old saying: "A stitch in time saves nine."

Some laundresses, in bluing, try to hide the dirt. To blue the clothes right they must be washed clean, rinsed thoroughly and then blued.

SOFT SOAP AND HOW IT IS MADE.

Take one quart of chipped soap to a pail of water. Boil together and add a half pound of washing soda. Boil well and let the soap dissolve; then let it cool and use when needed. Take two pounds of yellow bar soap and two pounds of washing soda. Add ten quarts of water. Cut the soap into slices and boil with soda for an hour. Then strain it and put it away. This is a splendid soap for soaking clothes over night and also for washing.

HOW TO MAKE HARD SOAP.

Hard soap is made from soft soap. Use five pails of soft soap, two pails of salt, one pound of resin; boil slowly together for one hour and a half and then turn out in pans to harden.

STARCH AND HOW TO MAKE IT.

For stiff work the starch must be good and thick.

When the water is boiling add a little spearmint or beeswax. Wet the starch in cold water, add a little blue and dissolve thoroughly; pour into the boiling water and stir quickly. For stiff cuffs add gum arabic to give body. To starch bosoms, cuffs and collars rub the thick starch into them well and put them flat on a board or a table. Have them nice and smooth with all the wrinkles out. When the starch is thoroughly rubbed in rub off with a clean soft cheesecloth, so that they are not smeary when they are dry.

For colored work in black or brown darken the starch to suit the color with blue. Thick starch, after use, can be strained through a cheesecloth and thinned out. It can be used then for starching plain clothes.

MERMAID BLUING

also prepared by Mary Johnson, and recommended for its wonderful whitening qualities.

Guaranteed not to streak, discolor or injure the most delicate fabrics.

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